

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-12 AID-05 EB-08 COME-00 CIAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3094

INFO AMEMBASSY SUVA

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY BONN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRD, EINV, EWWT, EAID

SUBJECT: GNZ GOA AND FRG TO DEVELOP TONGA-BASED SHIPPING LINE

REF: (A) WELLINGTON 970, (B) WELLINGTON 1395, (C) BONN 5010

START UNCLASSIFIED

1. ACCORDING TO A PRESS REPORT EMANATING FROM HAMBURG A 25 MILLION MARK PROGRAM TO HELP THE TONGAN GOVERNMENT TO DEVELOP SHIPPING AND TRAIN A MERCHANT NAVY IS BEING NEGOTIATED BY HAMBURG-SUD SHIPPING LINE. THE REPORT STATES THIS PROJECT WILL ALSO INVOLVE THE GNZ AND GOA. THE PROGRAM WILL CENTRE ON THE ESTABLISHMENT IN MAY OF THE SHIPPING CORPORATION OF POLYNESIA TO BE REGISTERED IN NUKUALOFA.

2. THE REPORT FROM HAMBURG SAYS THE TONGAN GOVERNMENT WILL HOLD THE MAJORITY INTEREST IN THE SHIPPING CORPORATION WITH HAMBURG-SUD RESPONSIBLE FOR MANAGEMENT. THE PROGRAM ENVISAGES FOUR DEVELOPMENTS: THE MODERNIZATION OF TONGAN INTER-ISLAND TRAFFIC, A VESSEL TO BE BUILT
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AND REGISTERED UNDER THE TONGAN FLAG FOR THE SOUTH PACIFIC TRADE, A TRAINING PROGRAM FOR TONGAN MERCHANT NAVY PERSONNEL AND A SHIP REPAIR SLIPWAY TO BE BUILT IN TONGA.

3. ACCORDING TO THE REPORT THE WEST GERMAN DEVELOPMENT AID MINISTRY HAS EXPRESSED "EXTRAORDINARY INTEREST".

THE NEW ZEALAND PRIME MINISTER, MR MULDOON, IS REPORTED TO HAVE DISCUSSED GENERAL WEST GERMAN INVOLVEMENT IN AID TO THE SOUTH PACIFIC DURING HIS EUROPEAN TOUR.

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4. THE GNZ MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OFFICIAL, S. CARLAW, ADVISED OGE E/C COUNSELOR THAT THE FRG AID MISSION DID ADVISE GNZ OFFICIALS OF SUCH A SCHEME WHEN IT WAS IN WELLINGTON BUT GNZ HAD FEW DETAILS. FOLLOWING APPEARANCE OF THE ABOVE REPORTED NEWSPAPER REPORT, MFA AID OFFICIALS HAVE ASKED FOR MORE DETAILS FROM THEIR MAN IN NUKUALOFA. CARLAW PROMISED TO PASS ON ANY INFORMATION RECEIVED. HE SAID GNZ IS NOT CLEAR WHAT THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE SHIPPING CORPORATION OF POLYNESIA (SCP) WILL BE TO THE B&O-LAURITZEN AND PACIFIC NAVIGATION LINES WHICH NOW OPERATE IN THE AREA OR HOW IT WOULD COORDINATE ITS ACTIVITIES WITH THE RECENTLY CREATED SOUTH PACIFIC FORUM LINE WHICH GNZ IS INTERESTED IN ASSURING WILL SUCCEED. NO GNZ OFFICIAL HAS YET TALKED WITH FRG EMBASSY HERE ABOUT THE SCHEME.

5. COUNSELOR OF FRG EMBASSY, W. SCHMITZ, WAS UNABLE TO SHED MUCH MORE LIGHT ON SUBJECT EITHER. HE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE SCP WOULD BE OPERATING AMONG THE DIFFERENT ISLANDS OF TONGA "AND MAYBE WESTERN SAMOA TOO". HE THOUGHT THE FRG LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DEVELOPMENT AID MINISTRY WOULD FINANCE THE SHIP FOR THE SCP.

6. COMMENT: IT APPEARS THAT THE PROPOSAL TO CREATE THE SCP IS A DEVELOPMENT GNZ IS NOT TOO WELL INFORMED ON. NOR DOES THE FRG EMBASSY SEEM TO HAVE DETAILS. NEITHER CAN SAY HOW THIS WOULD FIT IN WITH THE SOUTH PACIFIC FORUM LINE. THE MFA AID DIVISION APPARENTLY DOES NOT KNOW WHETHER THIS IDEA WAS BROACHED WITH PM MULDOON DURING HIS VISIT TO GERMANY. WE WILL REPORT ANY FURTHER INFORMATION WE MIGHT OBTAIN ON THIS. KILLGORE

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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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